

Proposals for Changes to Ride On Route 25

Residents of Victory Tower, an apartment building of seniors and persons with disabilities at 7051 Carroll Avenue, have proposed a change to the route of Ride On bus 25 in Takoma Park. The proposal has been shared with Ride On and the Takoma Park City Council. The City Council will be considered a resolution in support of the residents' request on Tuesday, May 27, 2008.

Existing Route:

Monday through Saturday, the current route begins at the Takoma Metro station, proceeds down Maple Avenue, turns left onto Sligo Creek Parkway, turns right onto Houston Avenue, turns right onto Flower Avenue (past Columbia Union College), turns right onto Carroll Avenue, turns right onto the drive through Washington Adventist Hospital, turns left onto Maple Avenue and returns to the Takoma Metro station. On Sundays, the bus follows the same general route, but does not turn onto Sligo Creek Parkway and Houston Avenue. Instead, the bus proceeds from Maple Avenue to Maplewood Avenue, and then turns right onto Flower Avenue and continues to the hospital.

Proposed Route:

The residents of Victory Tower have requested that the bus route be changed to the route labeled "Option 1" on the attached map. The bus would leave the Takoma Metro, proceed down Carroll Avenue and Philadelphia Avenue before turning right onto Maple Avenue and continuing the route. The changed route would allow the residents of Victory Tower to have more direct access to the Takoma Park Community Center and Washington Adventist Hospital. Currently, it takes two buses to go to the Community Center, although the Center is only five blocks from Victory Tower. The changed route would also avoid the seven speed humps, one raised crosswalk and one raised intersection on Maple Avenue between Eastern and Philadelphia Avenues that some Victory Tower residents find uncomfortable due to their physical problems.

Other Route Options:

In reviewing the Victory Tower residents' proposal, City of Takoma Park staff identified a further modification to help address the need of Maple Avenue residents to easily access the Long Branch commercial district.

The Long Branch commercial district near Flower Avenue and Piney Branch Road includes three supermarkets (Giant, Bestway, and Americana), a hardware store, a laundromat, a shoe store, a liquor store, numerous restaurants and small retail stores, banks, services (such as barber shop, dentist, optician, dry cleaner, travel agency), the new Mary's Center health clinic, as well as the Long Branch Library (with its pedestrian connection to the Long Branch Community Center) and Montgomery County's TESS service center. Access to the Flower/Piney Branch intersection also facilitates transfers to the following bus routes: Ride On's Routes 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20, and 24, and Metro's Route J4.

Option 2 on the attached maps would follow the route proposed by Victory Tower, but, rather than turning right onto Flower Avenue, would turn left and proceed to the Long Branch commercial

area. The bus would cross Piney Branch Road, turn right onto Arliss Street, turn right onto Piney Branch Road, then turn left onto Flower Avenue to Carroll Avenue and the route through the hospital.

Option 3 also connects to the Long Branch commercial area , but goes through the hospital grounds first. After following the Option 1 route, from Maple Avenue the bus would turn right and go through the hospital property, turn left onto Carroll Avenue, turn left onto Flower Avenue, right onto Arliss Street, right onto Piney Branch Road, left onto Flower Avenue, right onto Houston Avenue, left onto Sligo Creek Parkway, right onto Maple, then following the Option 1 route back to the Takoma Metro.

Analysis:

If Option 1, the change proposed by Victory Tower residents, were approved, the two blocks of mostly single-family homes on Maple Avenue between Carroll and Philadelphia Avenues would lose direct bus service. Residents of the rest of Maple Avenue and the area around Houston Avenue (both areas with a large number of apartment buildings) would have a less direct route to the Takoma Metro, but they would gain direct bus service to the Old Takoma commercial area, with its post office, stores and Sunday farmers' market.

City staff believe that connecting Maple Avenue to the Long Branch commercial area is very important for both Maple Avenue residents and the businesses in Long Branch. If changes are being made to Route 25 anyway, this would be a good time to make the route much more useful.

City staff believe that Option 3 would be more convenient for bus riders than Option 2. Option 3 allows for a shorter trip to the hospital for people coming from the Takoma Metro, Victory Tower, and the Franklin Apartments (also a facility for seniors and persons with disabilities). It allows for a more direct trip to the Takoma Metro station for persons living in the Houston Avenue area. For persons in the Houston Avenue area that might wish to take the Route 25 bus to a Long Branch grocery store, the resident could walk to Flower Avenue to catch the bus, but have a more direct ride to one's home while returning with grocery bags.

Options 1 and 2 could continue the Sunday use of Maplewood Avenue, rather than Houston Avenue. However, discontinuing the Sunday use of Maplewood Avenue might make more sense for all three of the options. More Houston Avenue riders might be interested in using the bus on Sundays once access to the Old Takoma and Long Branch commercial areas becomes possible.

All three options would require minor changes to Ride On signage. Options 2 and 3 would require new bus stops on Arliss Street. Option 3 would also require moving bus stops on Houston from one side of the street to the other; a couple of on-street parking spaces might be lost due to the switch.

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THESE PROPOSALS?

Please share any comments on these proposals by Friday, May 23, 2008 with Suzanne Ludlow, Takoma Park Deputy City Manager, 301-891-7229 or SuzanneL@takomagov.org.